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ABSTRACT

The brief paper summarizes the 1983 report, "Social Integration of Moderately Handicapped Students through Cooperative Goal Structuring: Influence of Teacher Instruction on Cooperation" by JoAnne Putnam. Techniques for constructing group learning activities using cooperative goal structuring are broken down into the following steps: (1) specify group objectives; (2) assign students to groups; (3) arrange the room and distribute materials; (4) introduce the task; (5) observe the students; (6) evaluate the work. The study found that after teachers used this process for 2 weeks (10 45-minute sessions), students without handicaps more often looked at and spoke to their peers with handicaps, and students with handicaps actively participated more often. About 20 recommended resources are grouped under the following topics: "Integrating Handicapped Students"; "Cooperative Goal Structuring"; "Behavioral Techniques to Promote Integration and Desirable Behaviors"; "Social Skills Training"; "Training Nonhandicapped Students." (DB)

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RESEARCH BRIEF FOR TEACHERS

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SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS: COOPERATIVE GOAL STRUCTURING

BRIEF T1
SEPTEMBER 1988

Research indicates that teachers' efforts are essential to the social integration of handicapped students with their nonhandicapped peers. To be successful, integration activities must be systematically structured and the teacher must provide guidance and encouragement. Teachers can use a variety of techniques to structure positive social interactions. These include behavioral procedures, social skill training, training students without handicaps to accept the handicaps of their peers, and structuring cooperative learning activities. This brief will discuss how to construct group learning activities using cooperative goal structuring. Resources on all of these techniques are listed at the end of this brief.

Cooperative goal structuring is setting a goal that can only be achieved if all members of a group work to achieve it. Cooperative goals promote achievement and productivity, and in situations that involve students who have handicaps as well as those who do not, they have been found to produce more positive relationships characterized by mutual liking and friendliness. This technique is effective for students at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels, and it is effective for students with varying types of mild and moderate handicaps. It can be used in teaching subjects ranging from science to team sports such as bowling. Cooperative goal structuring is more effective if the teacher provides lessons in cooperation, describes the cooperative behaviors expected of the students, and evaluates and rewards students based on group processes and efforts. It involves the following steps.

SPECIFY GROUP OBJECTIVES

Specify the instructional objectives to be obtained by the total group. For example, cooperative goal structuring was used in a fifth grade class studying a science unit on floating and sinking objects ("Sink or Float" by Elementary Science Study). The objectives of the first lesson were to develop group cohesion and to identify objects that sink and float.

ASSIGN STUDENTS TO GROUPS

Select the group size most appropriate for the lesson. In the example, students were assigned to groups of three, with two students from the regular fifth grade class and one student with a moderate handicap from a self-contained class in each group. The regular class fifth graders were told that they would be working in small learning groups with their peers with and without handicaps; the students from the self-contained class were told that they would be working in small working groups with regular class fifth graders.

ARRANGE THE ROOM AND DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS

For academic activities, arrange the classroom so that group members are close together and groups are as far apart as possible. In the example, members of a group were seated at adjacent desks or at a small table. Provide one set of curricular materials to each group. In the example, when students weighed objects, each group was given only one scale.

INTRODUCE THE TASK

Explain the task and the cooperative goal structure. Give examples of specific behaviors you expect of the students, such as reaching a common goal. In the example, the groups' first common goal was to select a group name. The teacher explained that it is important in cooperative groups to share your own thoughts and ideas, as well as to listen carefully to what others say, and to help the other members of the group understand what you are trying to do in your group. The teacher used phrases such as, "I'll be watching to see that everyone takes part in the activity," or "Make sure everyone in your group understands the assignment." After the students had selected the group names, their next task was to make a list of things that float on water and things that sink. Each group chose a recorder. The students were told that they would be successful when they had filled in the blanks on the worksheet and everyone had signed the sheet.

OBSERVE THE STUDENTS

Observe the student interaction, and intervene as a facilitator to help the groups solve problems in working together effectively and learn the interpersonal skills necessary for cooperation. Do not disrupt the groups unless it is necessary.

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EVALUATE THE WORK

At the end of the session, evaluate the group process and products; provide feedback and an opportunity to discuss the assignment and how well the group cooperated. In the example, the teacher graded the group products with stickers representing "very good," "good," and "not so good." She summarized the positive things she saw, using such phrases as "I saw (a particular group) say nice things to each other" or "I saw (a student) explaining the task to another student to help him understand." Students with handicaps were not singled out for reinforcement or otherwise made to feel different. Afterwards, the students were given 10 minutes for free play.

RESULTS

Studies have found that after teachers used this process for 2 weeks (10 45-minute sessions), students without handicaps more often looked at and spoke to their peers with handicaps, and students with handicaps actively participated more often.

RESOURCES

Integrating Handicapped Students

Ballard, M., Corman, L., Gottlieb, J., & Kaufman, M. J. (1977). Improving the social status of mainstreamed retarded children. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 69,* 605-611.

Bricker, D. D. (1978). A rationale for the integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped school children. In M. J. Guralnick (Ed.), *Early intervention and the integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped children.* Baltimore: University Park Press.

Gottlieb, J., & Leyser, Y. (1981). Facilitating the social mainstreaming of retarded children. *Exceptional Education Quarterly, 1*(14), 57-69.

Madden, N. A., & Slavin, R. E. (1982). *Count me in: Academic achievement and social outcomes of mainstreaming students with mild academic handicaps.* Johns Hopkins University: Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Cooperative Goal Structuring

Johnson. D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1986). Mainstreaming and cooperative learning strategies. *Exceptional Children, 52,* 553-561.

Johnson, R. W., & Johnson, D. (1980). The social integration of handicapped students into the mainstream. In M. C. Reynolds (Ed.), *Social environment of the schools.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Johnson, R., Rynders, J., Johnson, D. W., Schmidt, B., & Haider, S. (1979). Producing positive interaction between handicapped and nonhandicapped teenagers through competitive goal structuring: Implications for mainstreaming. *American Educational Research Journal, 16,* 161-168.

Pepitone, E. A. (1980). *Children in cooperation and competition.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Behavioral Techniques to Promote Integration and Desirable Behaviors

Renzaglia, A., & Bates, P. (1983). Socially appropriate behavior. In M. E. Snell (Ed.), *Systematic instruction of the moderately and severely handicapped* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.

Russo, S., & Koegel, R. (1977). A method for integrating the autistic child into a normal public school classroom. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis, 10,* 579-590.

Voeltz, L. M., Evans, I. M., Derer, K. R., & Hanashiro, R. (in press). Targeting excess behavior for change: A clinical decision model for selecting priority goals in educational contexts. *Child and Family Behavior Therapy.*

Social Skills Training

Brown, L., Nietupski, J., & Hamre-Nietupski, S. (1976). Criterion of ultimate functioning. In A. Thomas (Ed.), *Hey, don't forget about me!* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Gresham, F. (1981). Social skills training with handicapped children: A review. *Review of Educational Research, 51,* 139-176.

McFall, R. (1982). A review and reformulation of the concept of social skills. *Behavioral Assessment, 4,* 1-33.

Strain, P., Kerr, M. M., & Ragland, E. (1981). The use of peer social initiations in the treatment of social withdrawal. In P. Strain (Ed.), *The utilization of classroom peers as behavior change agents.* New York: Plenum.

Training Nonhandicapped Students

Cronk, M. S. (1978). *Attitude change toward trainable mentally retarded: Mainstreaming in reverse.* Paper presented at the World Congress on Future Special Education, Stirling, Scotland.

Donaldson, J. (1980). Changing attitudes toward handicapped persons: A review and analysis of research. *Exceptional Children, 46,* 504-514.

Handlers, A., & Austin, K. (1980). Improving attitudes of high school students toward their handicapped peers. *Exceptional Children, 47,* 228-229.

McHale, S., & Simeonsson, R. (1980). Effects of interaction on nonhandicapped children's attitudes toward autistic children. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 85*(1), 18-24.

This brief was abstracted from *Social Integration of Moderately Handicapped Students through Cooperative Goal Structuring: Influence of Teacher Instruction on Cooperation,* by JoAnne W. Putnam, University of Minnesota, December, 1983. The study was funded under U.S. Department of Education Grant number G008300020. Available for $.82 (microfiche) or $13.58 (hard copy), plus postage, from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. (1-800-227-3742). Order ED 270 919.

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